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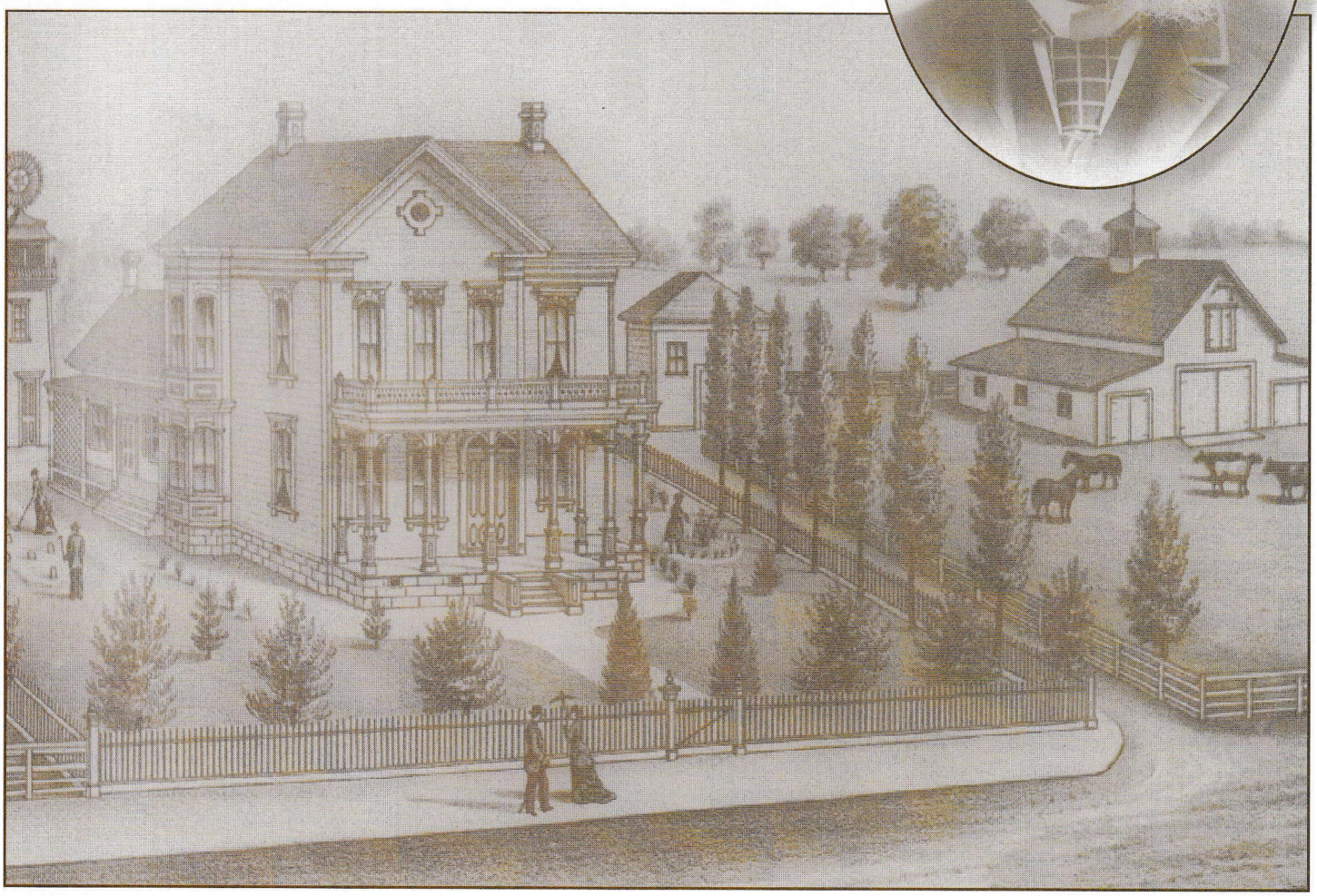
THE LAWRENCE FAMILY

by Ralph Lea & Janice Roth

Ezekiel Lawrence was born June 24, 1826, in Belleville, Ontario, Canada. His mother Maria (Bonesteel) was of English descent while his father Oliver P. Lawrence was of German descent. The family moved to Sidney in the Province of Ontario, Canada. Oliver died in 1830 leaving his son without a father at the early age of four.

At age 16, Ezekiel learned the millwright trade and after a four year apprenticeship moved to Coldwater, Branch County in Michigan where he worked his trade.

In 1850 Ezekiel left Michigan for California, crossed the Missouri River at St. Joe on May second and made the journey across the plains with mule



▲ *The 1879 illustration of Ezekiel Lawrence's home on East Lockeford Street. Inset: Ezekiel Lawrence, born in New York in 1826, left Michigan for California in 1850, and married Mary Hutchins in 1857 in Hangtown (Placerville).*

▲ *Ezekiel Lawrence's home on East Lockeford Street.* ▶

Ezekiel Lawrence's first house was a small cabin that was soon replaced by a small house. Still later in 1879, he built a fine two-story home in the 200 block of East Lockeford Street, between Washington and Stockton Streets for $4000 and a fine barn just to the east where the American Legion Building now stands.

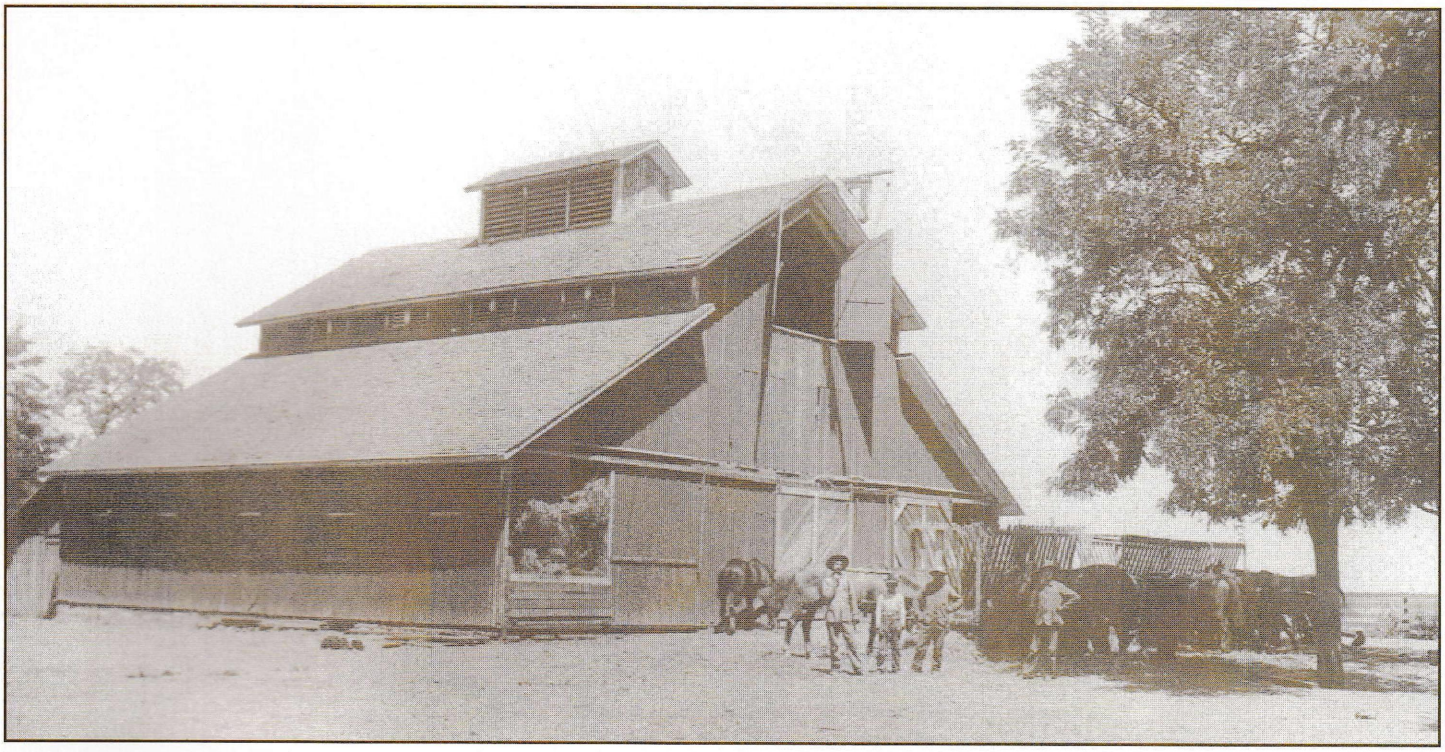
Mr. Lawrence was a member of the Lodi Lodge #251 I.O.O.F. and one of the original members and long-time director of the Granger's Co-operative Business Association located on the southwest corner of Sacramento and Elm Streets

teams. He arrived at Hangtown (Placerville) on August 31 of that same year where he mined and worked as a millwright. On May 22nd, 1857, while still in Placerville, he married Miss Mary Hutchins, a native of Canada and exactly one year to the day of the following year the Ezekiel Lawrence Family arrived in Lodi. He settled on a quarter section of land and later bought another quarter for a total of 320 acres located south of the Mokelumne River in section 1 township 3 north, range 6 east where he engaged in farming. The ranch was on both sides of what is now Cherokee Lane and south of the Mokelumne River. He planted 21 acres in almonds. Ezekiel and George S. Locke of Lockeford built a grain warehouse on Main Street in Lodi where they bought, sold and stored grain.

Lawrence installed a large pump with a 65 horsepower steam engine and a capacity of pumping 10,000 gallons of water a minute. This pump irrigated his land plus the land of John Hutchins, his brother-in-law. The two men built a two-mile long ditch also installing pipe part of the way. The ditch continued to the Hutchins property south of Lodi Avenue and the town of Lodi.

in Lodi. The building is still standing today. He was one of the originators of the Lodi Gristmill and also a director of the bridge on the Mokelumne at Cherokee Lane until it was turned over to the county. The Lawrence's had three children, William H., George E. and Nettie M. Lawrence.

The first schoolhouse in Salem School District was erected on the



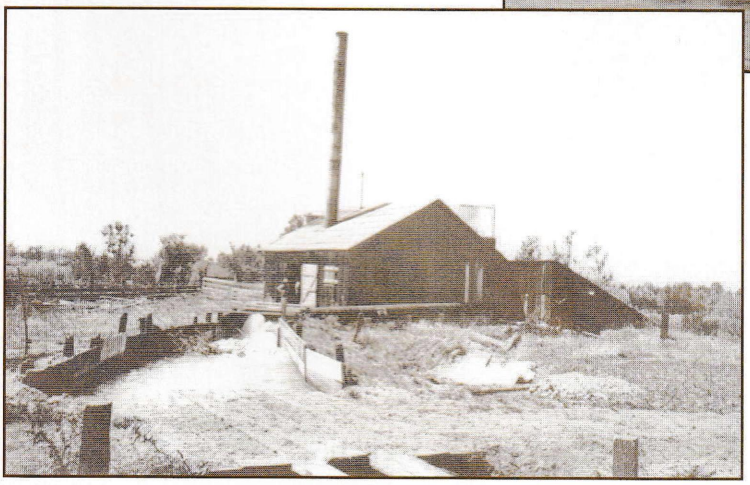
Lawrence Ranch barn, located where the Legion Building is today. ▲

Lawrence property just south of the Mokelumne River and east of Cherokee Lane and was the only school between Woodbridge and Staples Ferry in 1859. Peter and Victor Jahant hauled two wagon loads of lumber for the school from the Sierra Nevada Mountains using teams of horses. Ezekiel and Mr. Walker donated the carpenter work and supervised the labor.

In 1869, Ezekiel, in conjunction with two adjacent landholders A.T. Ayers and John U. Magley, petitioned the Central Pacific Railroad to establish the railroad station to be known as Mokelumne Station. Leland Stanford, then president of the Central Pacific, saw the sight and pointed out that the grade at that location would make it difficult for trains to start and stop. The Central Pacific engineers decided to move the station and town one-half mile south so the Lawrence property was not needed at that time. The new site was near the present railway station. John Magley, Ayers and R. L. Wardrobe donated the land for the use of the railroad.

Almonds at Lawrence Ranch. ▲

George Ezekiel Lawrence was born on April 14, 1861 near the present site of Lodi. He attended Lodi schools and he was the founder of Lodi's first band before he entered St. Mary's College in



▲ *The Ezekiel Lawrence pump was a 65-horsepower steam engine with a capacity of 10,000 gallons a minute, located just south of the Mokelumne River and east of Cherokee Lane on his property.*

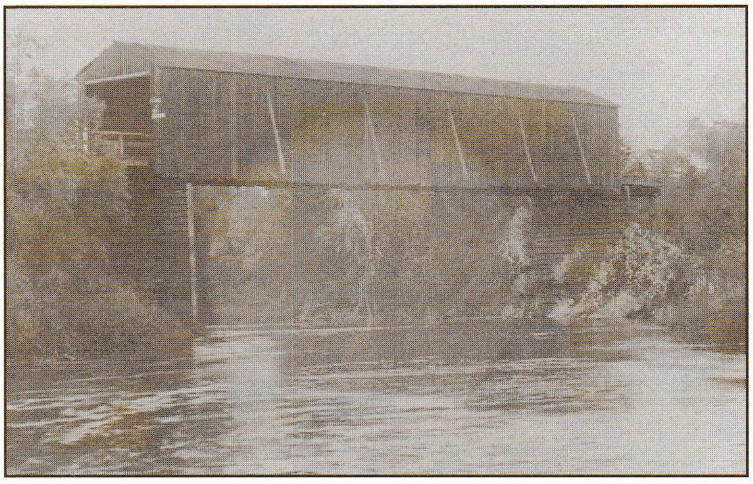
▲ *Hulling almonds at Lawrence Ranch, 1896. Upper row (l to r): Mrs. Gove, Maud (Hoover) Smith, Florence Sinks, Myrtle Brooks, Columbia Focacci, and the Forelady. Lower row (l to r): Mary Bragg, Annie Coblentz, Mrs. Eccles, Mrs. Warren, May Pope.*

ments, music, director or money the group saw an advertisement where an eastern company was selling a complete set of instruments at a reduced price. There was some donated cash but Charles Ivory, pioneer merchant and Ben Langford, Acampo rancher and state senator funded and signed a note for a three hundred down payment.

The group was able to obtain a bandleader in Edward R. Housman who was wintering in California with the Forepaughs Circus. He was amazed to find that not one of the 18 members that had just received an instrument knew how to play. The Lodi band was a success and over the years disbanded and then reorganized with different leaders. In 1894 George Lawrence was the band conductor.

George graduated in 1882 with a B.S. Degree and then took up the study

▲ *Lawrence Ranch.*



First bridge on Cherokee Lane over the Mokelumne. ▲

▲ *Approach to the Old Cherokee Bridge over the Mokelumne on Lawrence property.*

1876. He played cornet and performed solos with the band and resumed playing with the band after he returned to Lodi. Every town or village wanted to have it's own band. Less than seven years after Mokelumne was founded George Lawrence started the first band. Though they had no instru-

of law and was elected Justice of the Peace of Elkhorn Township for one term. He then entered the law offices of David S. Terry and J.C. Campbell in Stockton and was admitted to practice in 1887. Three years later he practiced law in Visalia, Tulare County.

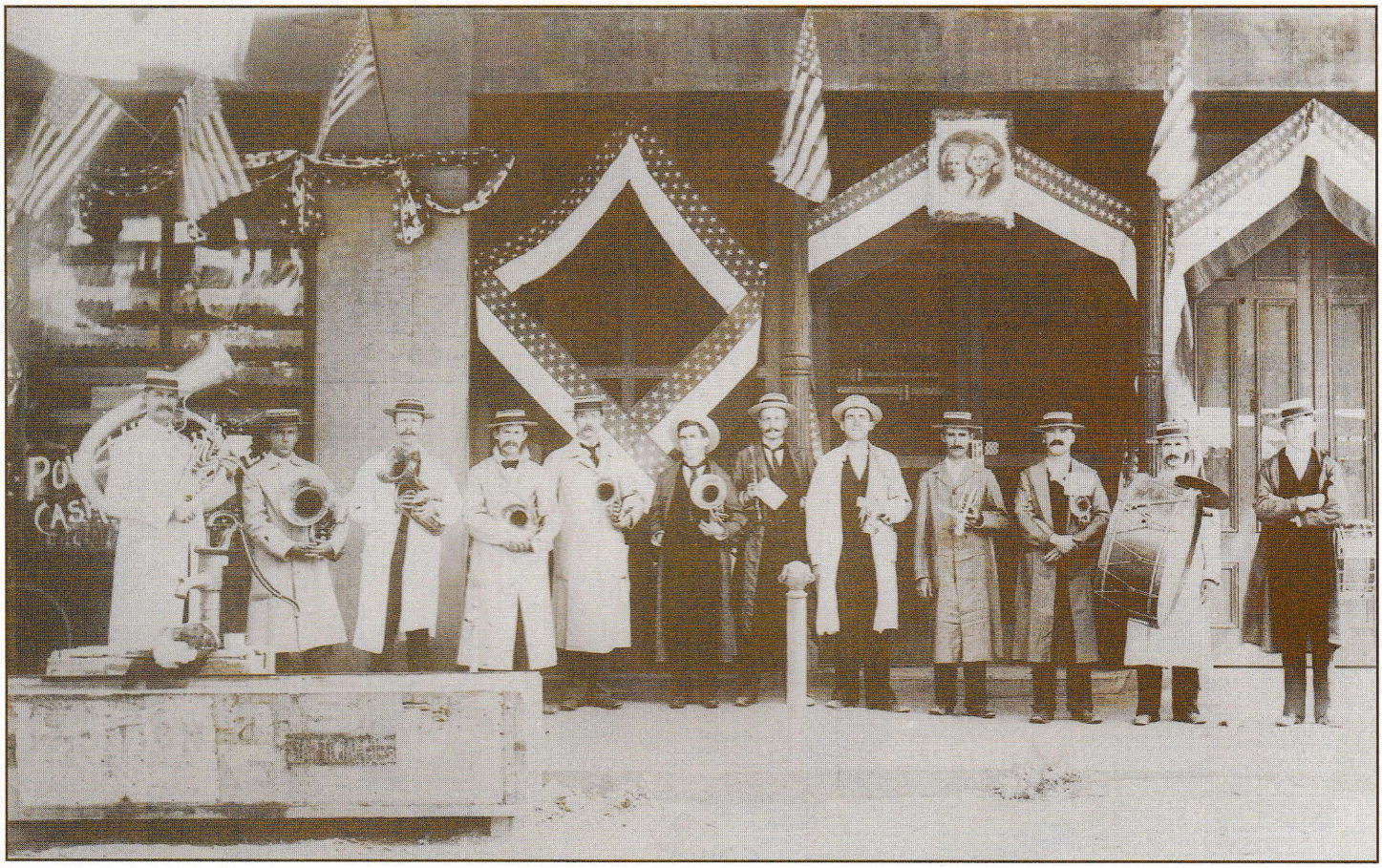
William, Georges' older brother, was born in Fairplay in El Dorado County, CA on March 6, 1858 and died in Lodi at the home of his parents on October 14, 1889 at the age of 31, after battling typhoid fever for three weeks. William Lawrence was the one who wrote a series of articles in the Lodi newspaper explaining the renaming of Mokelumne or Mokelumne Station to Lodi. He stated that John U.

George Lawrence, shown above in his office at his home on Lockeford Street. ▲

◀ George and his dog.

George Lawrence, first President of the Lodi Trustee Board. ▶

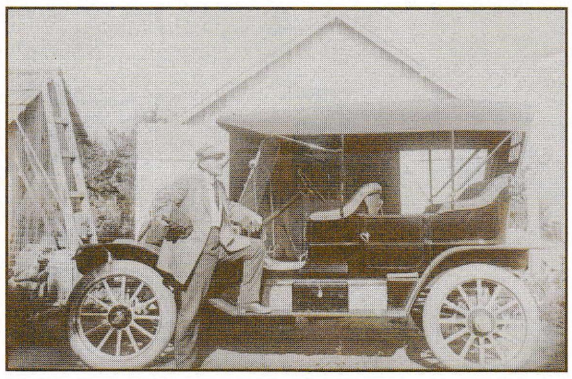
George E. Lawrence's home on the north side of Lockeford Street at Stockton Street. Note the sign on the tree. ▲



▲ *Early Lodi Band, July 4, 1896, in front of Smith's Butcher Shop; Powell's Cash Store to the left; horse water trough in front. Left to right: James (Slim Jim) Pope, Ollie Smith, Harvey Clark, Walter Brooks, Lem G. Waltermeier, Fred Sollars, Emanuel Silva, George Lawrence, leader in 1894, Ed Hutchins, Scott Robbins, Theron Lillie, Herb Nevin. Lodi originally started a band in 1876 with E.R. Housman in charge.*

Magley, A.C. Meeker, Uncle Dan Christ and Robert Cope held a meeting for the purpose of choosing a short name in lieu of Mokelumne Station for the delivering of the mail caused by the neighboring towns of Mokelumne Hill and Mokelumne City.

John Magley proposed the name of Salem, the others insisted on the name of Lodi. The name of Lodi was adopted, ratified and made effective by petition. The reason for the new name was the analogy the naming committee saw between the problems the Central Pacific had with the construction of the bridge across the Mokelumne River to that of the building of the bridge in Lodi, Italy. There were many coffer-dams built to shut out the fine (quick) sand and water so that they might build the bridge. Two years of expensive construction work was the result. This struggle reminded the committee and especially Mr. Cope of England of the problems of Napoleon at the bridge of Lodi, Italy that spans the river Adda in Austrian Italy.



▲ *George E. Lawrence*

After William died George returned to Lodi and took charge of the family's interests that included a vineyard planted in 1862 and 100 acres of new table grapes. In 1900, George was married to Emelia Jones, daughter of a pioneer physician of San Francisco.

Lodi was incorporated in 1906 and on December 7th of that year the board of trustees had an organizational meeting where George E. Lawrence was elected president of the board. Dr. J.M. Blodgett, C.A. Rich, Lee Villinger and F.O. Hale completed the five-member board. The town had no utilities and no money. They levied business license fees and submitted bonds of $50,000 for sewage and a disposal plant plus a combined water and electric plant. They also rented space for employees and a meeting place from the county on North Sacramento Street.

George Lawrence was president of the board for two full terms giving Lodi a good start. He led the way for Lodi to own their own utilities, built a City Hall, Fire Department and Library. They were able to purchase the water and electric company in Lodi and began paving the city streets. By 1912 there was enough profit from the electric and water to install electroliers (street-lights) in the downtown and purchase a fire truck the next year.

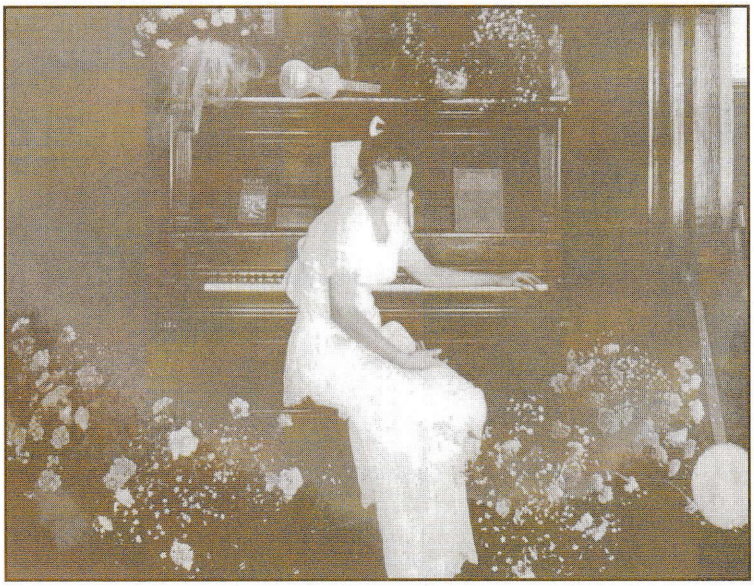
Marie Murray, George's niece, was

selected as Queen of the 4th of July Carnival in 1912 and earlier the Lodi Sentinel reported that "Marie Murray entertained little girls at her home on Lockeford Street in honor of her 11th birthday" on January 28, 1907.

Although George had no children he offered a site on Lockeford St. for the new high school in 1912. The offer was not taken. In March 1916 George donated land for a new ballpark. It was built on Lawrence Tract directly north of Producers Fruit Shed and was known as Lawrence Park. On January 1, 1928 he increased Lawrence Park by donating 6-7 more acres. Mayor W.A. Spooner reported on February 23, 1928 that the city installed an irrigation system at Lawrence Park and would install a grandstand when funds became available.

Mr. & Mrs. George Lawrence were avid travelers and completed a 6 months tour of Europe among many other excursions.

George Lawrence died December 12, 1933 of a heart attack. Services were held at the Hale & Bawdin Chapel in Lodi. Arthur L. Levinsky, schoolmate and life long friend, gave the eulogy. Father Kerrigan of St. Anne's Church also spoke. Honorary pallbearers were mayor G.M. Steele, John A. Henning, Fred Dougherty, Lloyd Mazzera, H.E. Welch and Dr. Tully. Active pallbearers were C.W. Callahan, Louis T. Mason, H.T. Mason J.S. Montgomery, Alex Friedberger and George Catts. Internment was in San Joaquin Cemetery in Stockton.



High school graduation picture of Marie Murray, niece of George Lawrence. ▲

1910, Picnic time at Lawrence Ranch, Mokelumne River bottom land. ▲

▲ *Emelia Lawrence on the Mokelumne.*

▲ *George Lawrence on the Mokelumne.*

Mary Lawrence and George Lawrence at Marshalls Mill. ▲

▲ *1910; George Lawrence took pictures of Lodi from the top of the new city water tank, this one looking southwest.*

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▶ *George and Emelia Lawrence living the good life in Yosemite.*

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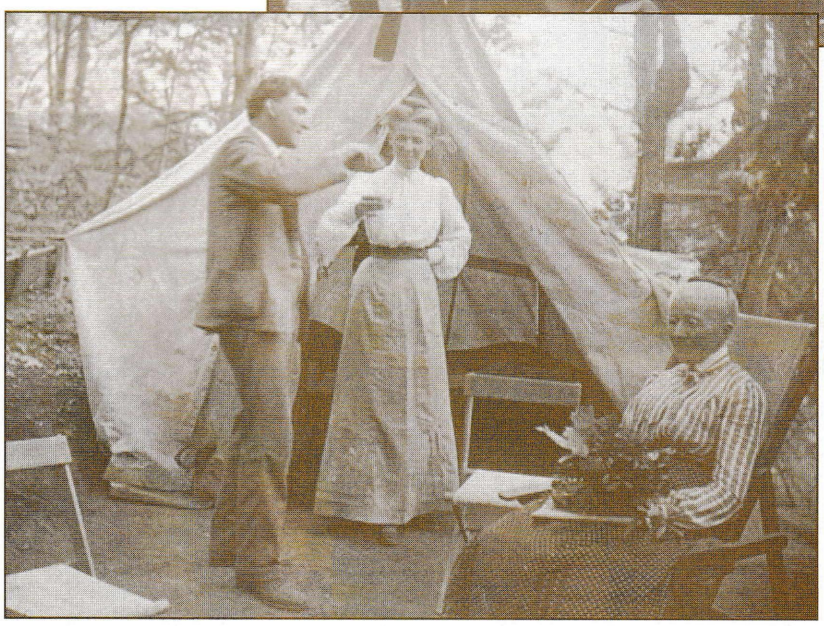

▲ *George Lawrence, Emelia Lawrence (wife), and mother Mary on a camping trip.*